

**STORY
PAPER**

COLLECTORS DIGEST

VOL. 39 AUG. 1985 NO. 464



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HW

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A DOG WITH A BAD NAME

I have just read again this fine old story by Talbot Baines Reed. The last time must have been over 40 years ago when I read it to a group of my boys in consecutive evenings when part of my school was evacuated to rural Surrey during the war years. I find it just as entertaining now as I - and my boys - did then.

It is my favourite of all the Reed stories, in spite of its outrageous coincidences. After all, staggering coincidences do happen, though not often in such profusion as they occur in "A Dog with a Bad Name". But, somehow, coincidence, when well handled, brings

a warm glow to the heart of the reader.

For a few chapters, this is a school story. I have no doubt that Bolsover College, and its new live-wire Head, Mr. Frampton, gave Charles Hamilton his model for the High Coombe School for Slackers. Though, in the case of Bolsover, the new Head's too fast and frequent reforms produced tragedy, whereas Hamilton's reforming Mr. McCann was used for slapstick comedy.

John Jeffreys, the slouching, nineteen-year-old hero - though he is not portrayed as heroic - finds a post in a small private school where the pupils gleefully link his name with the infamous Judge Jeffreys, just as the Remove, many years later, was to revive the idea when a brutal new Headmaster named Jeffreys went to Greyfriars.

"Dog with a Bad Name" is partly a love story, told in tender, un sentimental language, when the clumsy Jeffreys, saddled with his own sense of guilt, seemsto have little chance against his rival, the smart, suave, and rather treacherous Scarfe. It is, very mildly and very pleasantly, a religious story - Reed was a great Christian - but the writer never made the mistake of making his story ring "pi" - the mistake which a Magnet sub writer made when he wrote a pretty awful Magnet story "The Sunday Crusaders".

"Dog with a Bad Name" is melodrama in parts. It is bordering on Dickensian in parts. It even has an army sequence, all blending happily into a satisfying whole. And there is coincidence upon coincidence. And somehow the average reader finds all the coincidence heartwarming, and perhaps even a trifle subtle.

Last month a reader whose letter appeared in our columns appealed for more attention in C.D. to be given to the old hard-cover school stories of our youth. I'm all for keeping alive their memories, though it is unlikely, even in today's materialistic world, that the stories of Talbot Baines Reed could ever completely die. The same applies to the delightful school stories which Wodehouse wrote early in his career, making his schoolboys vastly entertaining but a little too facetious.

Desmond Coke's handful of stories are amongst my favourites. I have ever considered his magnificent "Bending of a Twig" as the most true-to-life school story ever written by anybody - and I voice my opinion as an ex-schoolboy and an ex-schoolmaster. Hylton Cleaver, and, particularly Coke, all wrote for the older schoolboy and the adult. Nearly as worthy were Avery, Bird, Goodyear, and others, who all wrote for the younger schoolboy reader.

Their memories will never die. WE must make sure they don't.

 THE BOYS' FRIEND 30 LIBRARY

A reader, whose letter we publish this month, mentions the time when the B.F.L. was printed horizontally across the page, the object being, presumably, to save paper by getting three columns of print to the page. This was an expedient used towards the end of the First World War, and, so far as I can judge, the format did not last long.

The Library had started out about 1907 as "The Jack, Sam, and Pete Library", which seemed rather a curious idea, but within a month or two the new Library became the B.F.L. With normal sized print going right across the page, and with each issue comprising, for many years, 120 pages plus covers (the S.B.L. was similar in its early years) it surely provided good value for money. Bound, as I have a good many of those early editions, they make neat little books in a bookcase.

As the war progressed, the number of pages was reduced, and a 2-column presentation introduced. It probably saved space, and certainly made for easier reading.

Then, as the war drew to its end, they tried printing sideways across instead of down the page, with the introduction of three columns of print. I have several of these, including one or two Cedar Creek story collections. I believe that the two Robert W. Comrade stories (which have been discussed recently by our Brooks' fans), entitled "Scorned by the School" and "Cad of the School" were reprinted in this format. I have them both somewhere in my archives.

I do not think the format was ever used for the Sexton Blake Library, and, as I said, I think it did not last long with the B.F.L. Awkward, and almost impossible for binding, it can hardly have been popular with the readers of the day, though these copies have a novelty value all these years later.

THE EDITOR

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WANTED: Mercia Bioscope Quarterly (Mercia Cinema Society)

Nos. 4 - 14. Mercia Newsreel issue No. 1.

M. R. THOMPSON, WYVERN SQUARE, SUNDERLAND, TYNE-AND-WEAR, SR2 9HD.

Danny's Diary



AUGUST 1935

It looks as though England may have found the answer to Australias' wonder cricketer, Don Bradman. The new cricket wonder of our own country is playing his first season with the main Yorkshire eleven. His name is Leonard Hutton, and he is only a boy yet - barely nineteen - but bowlers are beginning to loathe him. In a year or two he will be playing for England, for a certainty. He was born in Pudsey, where he went to school.

If he had been a bit older, Hutton could have benefited the English Test Team this year. For Wyatt's men have lost the Test series against South Africa. Every match was a draw except the one at Lord's which Wade's South Africans won. So, in the last game, at the Oval, England had to win outright to square the series. But it is another draw - the fourth. So South Africa, with their one outright win, have got the series in the bag.

The School for Slackers series in Modern Boy - the second series of tales about High Coombe - has ended. Oddly enough, there was no High Coombe story at all in the first Modern Boy of the month. The second issue, however, brought "The Cricket Dictator". Ferguson of the Fourth has been made Head of games, and he turns the slacking seniors out for practice at the nets at four o'clock in the morning. I really wouldn't have thought it would have been light at that time in the morning, but apparently it was. I'm a cricket fiend myself, but I wouldn't want to practise at 4 a.m.

The third issue of the month brought "Tar and Feathers for Jimmy McCann". It's a plot by Aubrey Compton, but the French master got the lot. But the new Head rescued Compton from a dangerous position, and at the end of this story Compton has a change of heart concerning Mr. McCann.

The fourth issue of the month brought "Finis" for the present series with "Jimmy McCann's Miracle". High Coombe beats Okeham at cricket - so it looks as though the Head has succeeded. The School for Slackers has at last had a total change of heart itself. And the author, Charles Hamilton, asks a question at the end of it all - "Will it last?".

The Captain Justice stories this month have been "The Surrender of Capt. Justice". The Captain, in enemy hands, is defeated. Then "Escape!". The Captain escapes from Crump's Castle. Then "The Dynamite Train". It's driven by Justice. Then "Blazing Peril" with the Captain still on the borrowed loco. Finally "Captain Justice - Traitor". The Captain betrays his most loyal comrades, handing them over to their bitterest foe. But Justice is a crafty gent, so I'm sure he has a plan.

The Biggles stories continue every week in Modern Boy. And G. E. Rochester contributes stories on Porsons' Flying School.

There has been a tragic happening in a European Royal Family. At the end of the month Queen Astrid, the wife of young King Leopold of the Belgians, was killed in a car crash in Switzerland. She was only 30, and has three children. King Leopold himself was driving the car when it crashed into the parapet of a bridge, and he himself was injured. Great sympathy is felt for the young King who lost his own father in a ski-ing accident only two years ago.

A top-hole August in the monthlies. The Greyfriars story in the Schoolboys' Own Library is "The Call of the Desert". An Arab schoolboy, Ali ben Usef, is kidnapped, and this is the start of some thrilling adventures in the Sahara Desert for the Remove chums and some of the Cliff House girls. The St. Jim's tale in the S.O.L. is also exceptional being "The St. Jim's Hikers", set mostly in England though at the end they find themselves at the gambling places in Northern France.

There is a King of the Islands story in the Boys' Friend Library. It is entitled "Boss of the Pacific".

Pierre Quiroule is back this month in the Sexton Blake Library in a novel called "The Secret of the Armaments King". Grant and Julie are introduced and find themselves prisoners in a

mysterious house. Their captor is a masked scientist, and the reason he wears a mask is startling, as Julie finds out.

Another good S.B.L. is "The Beauty Parlour Murder" by Gilbert Chester. A society lady is found dead in the home of a rising young beauty specialist, and he is suspected of her murder.

There is a new Agatha Christie book out this month. It is entitled "Death in the Clouds", it stars Hercule Poirot, and Doug has bought it for 7/6. This is the second new Poirot story in 1935.

The Packsaddle stories have ended in the Gem, and the result is much longer stories in the paper, which is a thing for which to be thankful. The month's first St. Jim's story is "The Cheat". It is a magnificent story. Levison persuades Gussy to let him, Levison, impersonate Gussy and sit for an examination as Gussy in Gussy's place. But Levison over-reaches himself when he tries to blackmail Gussy.

Next "The Sixth-Former's Secret". Tom Merry accidentally learns Langton's secret, and promises silence. But somebody else learns the secret and gives Langton away - and Tom Merry is blamed. Lovely tale.

Next a typical St. Jim's tale, and a rattling good one. It is "Ragging Mr. Ratcliff". When Ratcliff becomes obnoxious to the juniors, "Mrs. Ratcliffe" turns up. High jinks in an impersonation story.

Next "Chums on Patrol", a scouting story about the Curlews. A delicious interlude, this one. Final of the month is a gorgeous serious tale starring Lumley-Lumley. It is "The Outsider's Dark Hour", in which Lumley is the victim of a plot. A mighty fine month in the Gem, with every tale tip-top.

The St. Frank's serial "Mystery Mill" has proved to be a short one, and it has ended. A new serial "The Black Hand at St. Frank's" has started at the end of the month.

The government is calling for sanctions against Italy on account of all their threats against Abyssinia. And, in Germany, universal conscription has been introduced, so that every young man in the country has to go into the army.

A few very good, and a few not-so-good British film is "Abdul the Damned" starring Fritz Kortner. It is set in Turkey at the turn of the century. Shirley Temple is in "Brighteyes", about a little girl caught up between foster parents. It is this little girl's first picture in which she is billed as the top star. Very tweet!

An elaborate film is "The Devil is a Woman" starring Marlene Dietrich. A bit heavy-going for me, but the ladies, and Doug, love it. A very American type comedy is "Helldorado", starring Richard

Arlen and Madge Evens.

Warner Oland is in "Charlie Chan in Paris", and Billy Cotton and his band, with Nellie Wallace, are in a lightweight bit of stuff named "Variety". A novel film is "The Scoundrel" starring Noel Coward. A famous writer dies, and his ghost comes back. Good fun in its way.

A good crime film is "The Glass Key" starring George Raft and Edward Arnold. A fairish spy thriller is "British Agent" starring Leslie Howard and Kay Francis. So a mixed bag this month. With autumn round the corner, I reckon the shows will get better.

A Cleethorpes dentist, named Haglyn Taylor, has swum the Channel in 14½ hours. A long time to be in the water.

There is an unusually splendid portrait of Harry Wharton on the cover of the first Magnet of the month. The story, "Harry Wharton Wins Through", is the last story in the remarkably fine Stacey series. The title tells all. Stacey at last is exposed for the cheat he is, and even Mr. Quelch is at last convinced.

Then started a new summer holiday series. The opening tale is "Fish's Holiday Stunt". Fish's "popper" invites the Greyfriars chums to spend the vacation at Portercliffe Hall, a grand old Sussex mansion. And because Bunter discovers that the Fish family is on the lookout for a hoard of gold sovereigns, he is able to get into the holiday party as the price of his silence. Dear old Alonzo Todd (we haven't heard of him for ages) turns up and joins the party as does Oliver Kipps, the boy conjurer.

The series continues with "The Mystery of Portercliffe Hall", in which Bunter finds that his presence is not desirable to the Fish family or to his chums. Then "The Phantom of Portercliffe". Harry Wharton & Co. explore Portercliffe Hall from cellar to turret, but it is Billy Bunter who finds the secret passages of the mansion.

Finally "The Greyfriars Gold Hunter", when Bunter, by a lucky chance, comes upon the secret of the old oak tree. The series continues next month. It is pretty good, and it is great to have Alonzo back playing a star part.

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NOTES ON DANNY'S DIARY FOR 1935

Though the golden age of the Magnet was well past, it has long been my opinion that the Stacey series was the best that Hamilton ever wrote. Even allowing for the artificiality of the "doubles" theme, it was a series which had everything. A very, very fine school story. And Chapman's portrait on the cover of

the last story of the series was probably the best one the celebrated artist ever drew.

S.O.L. No. 249 "The Call of the Desert" comprised four stories from the eight-story Schoolboy Arab series of the Magnet of the autumn of 1924. The introductory story of the series was omitted. S.O.L. No. 250 "The St. Jim's Hikers" comprised four stories of the short but splendid caravanning series of the Gem in late summer 1924. A tip-top couple of S.O.L.s.

I am of the opinion that the Sexton Blake story "The Secret of the Armaments King" was a new story from Pierre Quiroule. I cannot trace that it had appeared previously, and, in addition it was more the type of tale the writer produced in the thirties in contrast to his novels of the twenties.

The 1935 Gem story "The Cheat" had been "Bought Honours" (a lovely title) in the summer of 1912, and arguably the finest blue Gem of all time. "The Sixth-Former's Secret" had been "The Spy of the School" (another masterpiece) the following week in 1912.

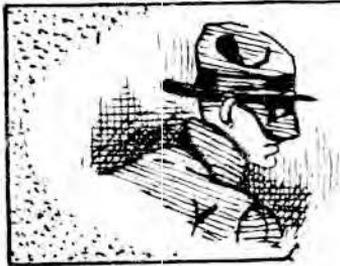
"Ragging Mr. Ratcliff" had been "Rough on Ratcliff" (a superior title) the following week in 1912. "Chums on Patrol" had been "The Schoolboy Scouts" (it introduced Inspector Fix who was to appear again from time to time) in the autumn of 1912. "The Outsider's Darkest Hour" had been "One Against the School" (another fine school drama) the following week in the autumn of 1912). So Danny has reached the end of the 2nd series of the School for Slackers, and, though Danny didn't know it, it was the end of it so far as Modern Boy was concerned. As there were just the two series - and both sets appeared in the earlier months of 1935 - it does not suggest to us that the tales were very popular. It was strange that Hamilton was to add to the series in his post-war work. Probably a case of an elderly writer at his wits end for anything new, and content to re-hash his old plots, even the less successful one.

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THE REV. ARTHUR POUND

I was saddened to learn of the death of Arthur Pound on 19th June last. He was a founder member of the Midland OBBC, though he had not attended since early days, but he still retained his interest in the hobby, and back numbers of the CD will be found to contain a number of his poems on Hamiltoniana. I had known him since the 1950's and not a year passed without our meeting at least once. He was a man of integrity and high principles, but he also possessed a keen sense of humour especially where the Magnet was concerned. He was widely known and respected, and even Mrs. Pound was surprised at the number who attended his funeral, which was conducted by the Bishop of Dudley. We shall not lightly forget him.

ROGER JENKINS



BLAKIANA



FORTY YEARS OF SEXTON BLAKE (Part II)

by W.O.G. Lofts

One day I received a communication from the Legal Department of Fleetway Publications, requesting me to call on them as soon as possible as it was a matter of great urgency. Seemingly they had heard about my knowledge of Sexton Blake, as well as my research achievements. Its head was Athol Johnson a Barrister-in-law - a small wiry friendly looking man whom I learned much later was reputed to be one of the cleverest lawyers in the business dealing with copyright and libel matters. In fact he had to be, being legal consultant to one of the biggest publishers of magazines in the world. Athol had a very strong connection with our hobby as his father was Henry T. Johnson the very prolific and popular boys paper writer. In fact Athol was named after the hero in his almost classical circus serial 'The Pride of the Ring'.

Briefly I was informed that the firm had recently signed an important contract with a T.V. Company that was going to produce a series of Sexton Blake films featuring Laurence Payne in the leading role. As the setting was to be in the twenties, they wanted to use old stories, when the most suitable was those published in the Union Jack, written by Gwyn Evans, Robert Murray Graydon, and G. H. Teed. Unfortunately when the tales were penned television did not exist - at least to the public. Therefore they wanted to contact either the authors, or heirs to come to some agreement with them.

I was able to inform him straight away that all three authors had died in the 1937/40 year period. As this was almost thirty years ago, it was doubtful if their wives were still in the land of the living. In fact I did not know even their christian names, or where they might be after all these years - but would have a go at tracing them. I had a deadline of about a month, when using methods that Sexton Blake and Sherlock Holmes would have approved plus

an enormous amount of luck I succeeded eventually in tracing all three within the time available.

Mrs. Gwyn Evans a tiny amusing figure lived not far from me in the same postal district of London, and I took her up to Fleetway House. With her new found wealth she was able to visit her daughter abroad. Mrs. Robert Graydon was of a more serious type, and sharp business woman. She had never forgotten the fact that a first edition of the classic story Treasure Island had been thrown away in error many years before. It had contained a message inside written to her husband when a small boy by Robert Louis Stevenson. Would have fetched a small fortune at any auction.

Mrs. Teed I met last living not far from Cardiff in South Wales. Brought up on a higher Social scale than the other two, she reminded me of the late actress in Dr. Finlay's Case-Book. Living with her sister in a large house belonging to an elderly gentleman who looked like Lloyd George, we had dinner with him dressed in evening dress, with silver service and maid in attendance.

I know that Mrs. Evans and Graydon have since died, and possibly by this time Mrs. Teed. It was comforting to know that I was instrumental in helping them to some degree in their declining years to ease their financial burdens in our highly inflated age.



A LETTER FROM ST. FRANK'S

by an Old Boy

How often do you think of your schooldays? Do you make comparisons of the then-and-now and feel any better for it?

Those of my generation have come a long way since those far off school terms, and what we were taught then and what knowledge we have accumulated since has changed our ideas quite considerably. For instance, when I was a boy it was a theory that if you put some dirty linen and a piece of cheese in a corner of the cellar you would get spontaneous reproduction.

That mice would automatically appear. But like a lot of other theories that one never materialised. There were, however, a lot of good ideas in the long-ago. We were taught etiquette and to respect our elders. Even the most elementary schools of learning included good behaviour teaching in its curriculum.

I find much comfort and solace in those old times when we knew how to treat a lady. When the boys at St. Frank's meet the girls of the Moor View School the boys raise their caps. Else where this form of acknowledgment has almost disappeared. Only the other day in London I saw a young couple board a bus and the young man let the girl on first. Which showed me he was not a St. Frank's scholar for he would have been taught to board the bus himself first and find a seat for his lady friend.

But times have changed and not for the better. People have changed too. In the cosmos that is St. Frank's the world is exactly the same as it was when I was a junior schoolboy. The servants of knowledge who rule our early years seem to have an idea fixed that everything must change and that we must change too. I wonder how many of you who read these notes would willingly return to their formative years and begin life all over again.

Just think of the bunch of theories we could wash out but were idolised in the old days. Utopia was a word we often bandied about as a place where everything was perfect.

It was a name given by Sir Thomas More to the imaginary island in his political romance of the same name. But Utopia means Nowhere, so another theory is dashed.

It is hardly worth mentioning a place as being perfect when it is nowhere. The inference is that nowhere is perfect, but many places and environments that I have known fall not far short of being perfect.

I have watched cricket played on Little Side at St. Frank's on a beautiful summer's day and for me that was a perfect day. I have known the thrill of excitement at breaking up periods when Christmas nears. And one of Lord Dorrimore's Holiday cruises in his famous SS WANDERER. There are moments of perfection all around us for those who have eyes to see.

But for many there will still be the elusive Utopia that sadly beckons them to... nowhere.

A 70th ANNIVERSARY

by C. H. Churchill

June 12th, 1915, was a real red letter day for schoolboy fiction for it was on that date that the first Nelson Lee Library appeared in the bookshops and this was to last until August 23rd, 1933. If one consults the calendar one will find that 1915 was just seventy years ago. The Lee ran for eighteen years so that for the last fifty-two years we have been without any further new numbers. In 1933 the Lee was amalgamated into the Gem and St. Frank's stories were included in that paper for a while but eventually ceased.

When the stories were relegated to a small part of the Gem they lost all their magic which was really only to be expected. With the demise of the Lee Brooks obviously lost his "sparkle" although there were signs of this earlier in the second new series in fact, almost certainly due to editorial interference or influence.

We were, of course, regaled with repeats in the Schoolboys' Own Library and these continued until the wartime stoppage. Only a percentage of the old "Small" series was treated in this way. Usually three Lees were condensed into one S.O.L. but on the whole they were fairly well done. Since the war Howard Baker Press has produced one or two volumes of St. Frank's reprints which came out very well.

Since the war, up until his death, Mr. Brooks had a great number of stories published by Collins relating the adventures of Inspector Bill Cromwell and Johnny Lister under the penname of Victor Gunn. These were very good and one can, with a little imagination, see Nelson Lee and Nipper in the parts. As I pointed out recently one Nelson Lee pre St. Frank's story was actually printed as a Cromwell story with just the names altered.

We fans of Mr. Brooks however, can be thankful that we can still read the Nelson Lee Library through our collections or borrow them from the Nelson Lee Library instituted by our late friend Bob Blyth and now carried on by our new friend, Bill Bradford.

Let us therefore drink to E. S. Brooks on this 70th anniversary for giving us so many hours of first class entertainment in his stories of the detective adventures of Nelson Lee and Nipper and the hundreds of stories of Dorrie, Umlosi and the boys of St. Frank's in their many and varied activities.

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FOR SALE: Odds and Bobs - s.a.e. for list. DAWKINS, 33 Ivy House Park, Henlade, Taunton, Somerset, TA3 5HR.

END OF AN ERA

by E. Baldock

When the Magnet ceased publication in May 1940 it was as though the world - or a very important part of it had suddenly disappeared. Overnight a way of life had passed into limbo. It was sudden, unexpected and quite unprecedented. We could not visualise a world without our weekly Magnet, we had grown up with it and it had become a part of our daily existence. Harry Wharton & Co., Bunter, Vernon Smith, Coker and all the other fellows were as real to us as the chaps who lived next door or in the next street.

1940 was for many of us a watershed in our lives. The termination of an old way of life and the beginning of a new and far more turbulent one. We were all much pre-occupied in one way or another with a world war which uprooted all the ideas and conceptions we had hitherto regarded as sacrosanct. We were plunged almost overnight into an urgent turmoil of action. This was instrumental to a degree in blunting and lessening the realisation that we had lost a dear, and what we had assumed to be a permanent institution, something which would go on forever. The dear old Magnet had ceased to be; a regular and splendid companion for as long as we could remember had passed into oblivion. There was something missing from the Saturdays immediately following the demise, a void which was, to myself at least, very tangible. A facet of our way of life had gone.

Those of us who were fortunate in having preserved our copies over the years, had perforce to fall back upon and re-read the earlier sagas to refresh once more our memories and to bring into sharper focus the half-forgotten adventures and plot; to marvel at the patience of Mr. Quelch in his dealings with William George Bunter; to be awed by the crass yet lovable stupidity of Horace Coker, and admire the long-suffering forbearance of Potter and Greene; to visit again the old Remove form-room with its venerable time-pitted desks, the scene of so many dramatic encounters over the years; to absorb anew the atmosphere of that magic corner of Kent wherein flows the river Sark hard by Greyfriars School - this was no tiresome pursuit as may be imagined. Yet the void created by the blank weeks following the old Paper's termination were traumatic, I recall, and very difficult to accept.

Although too young to appreciate the very earliest days of the Magnet, I have many times since thought of that momentous day in February 1908 - perhaps not considered so at the time - when the old Paper was launched. What aspirations and anticipations

must have motivated the minds of those responsible for the project. What dreams must have been germinating in the mind of the then young Frank Richards; possibly not in the wildest of these did he see his creation, Greyfriars School, with all its fascinating appendages, marching forward going from strength to strength over so many years, and giving pleasure to so vast a readership.

Not being gifted with the mystic art of foresight we knew nothing of the wonderful resurrection which lay before us, albeit some years ahead. Having survived one world upheaval, the old Paper had marched triumphantly on to even loftier heights during the inter-war years. The fellows of Greyfriars were consolidating their place in our affections as perhaps few other characters have done. Then out of the blue, as it were, a vacuum was created and we were left in mid-stream with a powerful legacy of no less than forty years of the Greyfriars' legend upon which to draw. Events have now been so ordered that the legend is in a fair way to being reperpetuated for posterity through the medium of facsimile copies.

From the breezy uplands of Courtfield Common, if one listens carefully, there may still be heard the distant roar of cheering re-echoing from big-side as Wingate or one of his stalwart companions instigate yet another fine movement resulting in a brilliant goal for the old school. Or from the equidistant Sark the sudden burst of youthful and ironic cheering and laughter as Coker collects one more 'crab' under the seething and embarrassed gaze of Potter and Greene. And possibly from some bosky, furze-covered hollow may yet be discernable the faint aroma of cigarette smoke occasioned by the presence of Harold Skinner, Snoop and Stott, or others of a like persuasion. Or an angular shade in homburg, coat and with walking stick may be glimpsed fading over yonder hill. So passes Mr. Quelch into the realms of history where, perchance, he may encounter his classical hero, Virgil, with whom one may be sure he will have much in common, much to discuss, not least the origins of the Eneid. These echoes are part of the very atmosphere of a legend, the lights and shadows of which will not lessen with the passage of time.

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THE THIRTY-NINE CHAPS

by Ernest Holman

The Skipper's description, in July CD, of the Remove at Greyfriars as top-heavy was very apt. Probably Hamilton never fully grasped just how many characters had not, so-to-speak, been removed!

The reference in the article to the Who's Who compilations

might have put the finger on the right spot. Originally, Pentelow's extensive Greyfriars Gallery had dealt pretty thoroughly with main and subsidiary characters. For those who liked such collections, JNP did quite a good job.

Surely the oddest item under the heading of Who's Who must have occurred in the 1921 Holiday Annual. Here appeared a list of all Removites, with their ages, heights, weights, studies - 39 of them.

Well, some time ago, Hamilton had disposed of Levison and Elliot (these two were not part of the 39). As time went by, Hamilton obviously decided he had no use for such as Bulstrode, Delarey (not his own character, anyway), Hillary, Rake, Smith Minor (the sole occupant of Study 8), Alonzo Todd (with the odd re-appearance now and then), Treluce, Trevor. Anyway, these names all formed part of the 1921 Annual Who's Who, whatever non-use the Author may have decided for them. As far as Hamilton was concerned, the Remove probably numbered 30 or 31, which perhaps was more or less the eventual norm. Even then, many of them were simply 'back-cloth boys' (YOU name them!).

The snag was, Hamilton's own pruning over the years meant nothing to the members of what he rather facetiously referred to as the Editor's Menagerie. The many illustrated items that figured at the foot of the Magnet centre pages for some time were for ever recalling 'names from the departed'. For example, Delarey provided the Head with a diamond from Kimberley; Rake was an enthusiastic move-camera operator; and so on. Hamilton might not want the chaps - but the sub-editors did!

In 1938, during the Second Pacific Series, the Greyfriars Guide at the rear of the Magnet provided evidence of - yes, 39 members of the Remove. Not quite the same names as had appeared 17 years earlier; Elliot seemed to have returned, Alonzo Todd to have departed.

By the end of 1939, Hamilton could in all truth have been said not only to have cut down, but to have cut out, virtually most of the back-cloth. Probably a dozen and a half names would have then settled the Remove - but one must never reckon without sub-editors. The 1938 List was replaced in December 1939 by a further List; still 39 Removites, with Alonzo Todd back in and Elliot out. As, in fact, the 1921 List had provided.

Hardly surprising; the List of 1939, with names, ages, weights, heights, studies, was IN EVERY DETAIL a reprint from the 1921 Holiday Annual!

Small wonder the Greyfriars Remove was top-heavy!

NO ESCAPE FROM BUNTER (PART TWO)

Hard on the heels of my announcement in the July CD of a new 'adult' Billy Bunter novel (BUNTER SAHIB by Daniel Green) due for publication in September, news arrives of another Bunter novel, this time written by the distinguished David Hughes, author of many books and winner of the 1984 W.H. Smith Literary Award for his novel THE PORK BUTCHER. The title is BUT FOR BUNTER and it will be published by William Heinemann Ltd. on September 22nd.

I quote from the book's dust-jacket 'blurb': "... a new masterpiece - uniquely imagined and brimming with comic invention... offers nothing less than a new interpretation of 20th century history, inspired by the antics of one of schoolboy fiction's all-time favourite heroes. Billy Bunter lives'... and is alive (though only just at 89) and living in senile retreat in New Romney. In a rambling house by the sea, Patrick Weymouth (a government investigator) finds the ancient sybarite Archibald Aitken - the original of the rascally Bunter - and is swept by his tide of memories to some startling discoveries: the real identities of Greyfriars' legendary 'Famous Five', and the truth about some of the 20th century's most cataclysmic events. If Archie is to be believed, Bunter is far from fiction - he has helped to make history. Neither the classic stories of Frank Richards, nor the great men and landmarks of this troubled century will ever seem quite the same again. David Hughes has given us a new lens through which to view them, and a new metaphor for our times. Splendidly funny, provocative and profound, BUT FOR BUNTER is one of the most original and enjoyable novels of the year".

It all sounds quite fascinating and I hope to return to this new book (and to BUNTER SAHIB) when I have read them...

BRIAN DOYLE



MIDLAND

Only eight members attended our June meeting. Disappointing after the good attendances of recent months. It was good, however, to see Christine Brettell again looking well after a long illness.

We began with one minutes silence in memory of the Rev. Arthur Pound who was once a member of our club and who died last

week. He was 83, and had always retained a love for the old papers.

Joan Golen announced that Peter Masters, our minute secretary, has been awarded the B.E.M. for his services to industry. We are sure he deserved the honour award in the Queen's birthday honours list.

As both Chairman and Vice-Chairman were missing your correspondent took the chair. The Library is not used so it was decided to sell the Magnets at 10p a copy to attending members.

After the refreshment break I gave a quiz of a general nature. I thought it was a bit difficult, but Christine Brettell made light of it, celebrating her return with 14 out of 15 correct. The prize was a Howard Baker facsimile. The next item was a game, Hamilton Families, devised by Vin Loveday. It was the old game of Happy Families rehashed. It was long and quite enjoyable, and Christine Brettell was again the winner.

I gave a reading from Magnet No. 1138 showing Ponsonby with Bunter in his clutches. Till Bunter turns the tables.

The next two meetings will be informal, but we are expecting Bill Crofts to address us at our meeting on September 24th. We hope for a good attendance.

JACK BELLFIELD (Correspondent)

CORAL JUBILEE CELEBRATION

FRIENDS AND members of the Clubs celebrated the 35th Anniversary of the founding of the Northern Club at the Mansion Hotel, Leeds, on Saturday, 18th May.

There was a welcoming sherry (provided by Happy Hours Unlimited) and an impressive display of hobby literature (brought along by members from their libraries).

Celebration Menu booklets (and serviettes) adorned the tables, and there was a splendid luncheon of (almost obviously!) Yorkshire Pudding, followed by roast beef! Home-made apple pie and finally coffee with dairy cream and wafer mints completed an enjoyable meal.

Sherry for the toasts again was provided by Happy Hours Unlimited. The speakers looked back on the history of the Club and the Hobby, paying tribute to the founding fathers - the young men (as they were) who returned to civilian life after the war to find a changed world, a world without St. Frank's, without St. Jim's, without Greyfriars! They set out to reclaim the past - not simply for reasons of nostalgia, but because of the intrinsic literary worth of the old boy's books.

Tribute was also paid to Howard Baker for his work in producing facsimile copies of the old books. Our speakers wished him well and looked forward to the time when (with luck) we would have on our shelves the complete saga of Greyfriars!

An afternoon's entertainment followed with first of all a talk by the guest speaker, Bill Lofts. He spoke about the Howard Baker books, and told how the publishing venture came about.

Later, there was entertainment by members of the Rochdale Players, who presented a series of humorous and dramatic readings from the Magnet, interlarded with poems culled from Gyles Brandreth's 'Yaroooh!'.
.

After a buffet tea the celebrations continued with a visit to Michael Bentley's house, where we were entertained and ushered into Michael's private cinema, there to see two cartoon films, followed by 'Passport to Pimlico' - the Ealing Comedy. Refreshment was provided by Mrs. Bentley and rounded off a delightful day.

Copies of the Menu booklet are available from the Secretary (the Rev G. Good, Thornes Vicarage, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF2 8DW) price 50p, plus 17p postage.

LONDON

The July meeting took the members by the old bus to Waltham Abbey via a delightful journey through the Epping Forest via Walthamstow, where the first pick up of members took place. On to Woodford and Woodford Green, Buckhurst Hill to Loughton where the main party were waiting. Then the journey to Theydon Bois where the picnic lunches were enjoyed. Boarding the bus once more and on to Waltham Abbey. Here the old abbey was inspected and thoughts naturally turned to King Harold, the loser of the Senlac Hill battle, circa 1066. The delightful tea venue was enjoyed and there was an excellent menu including apple tart for the American visitors.

A delightful journey back to Loughton and Walthamstow ended a day to be remembered. Votes of thanks were accorded to Mark Jarvis for providing the bus and Chris Harper for arranging the tea rendezvous.

Next meeting on Sunday, 11th August at the Ealing home of Thelma and Bill Bradford.

Kindly inform if intending to be present.

BEN WHITER

NORTHERN

Meeting number 423 - Saturday, 13th July, 1985

Thirteen were present on a warm summer's evening. Thirteen certainly was not unlucky, for we were very pleased to welcome a potential new member, Eric Cox.

Jack Allison gave a report of his visit along with Molly, to Radio Leeds for a radio interview.

Molly reported that we were to face a large increase in rent: it was agreed that we should stay at our present accommodation for the time being, unless anyone could find any other place suitable and cheaper.

Photographs had been obtained of our Coral Jubilee luncheon and Michael Bentley provided complete sets for members who wanted them. Betty and Johnny Hopton from our Midland Club had also kindly sent along some photographs, along with a very kind letter of thanks.

Margaret Atkinson presented her first quiz: along with her husband Keith, she is a keen follower of the works of Charles Hamilton. In the past we have always criticised Harry Blowers' quizzes, but in the future we shall keep quiet! Keith Atkinson (who promised he had known nothing of the nature of the quiz) and Bill Williamson tied for first place with a total of 6 - a rather abysmal result.

Keith Smith read an interesting article concerning EXPULSIONS AND SUSPENSIONS from a 1965 copy of Story Paper Collector, by Bill Lofts. Altogether, nine boys had been expelled from Greyfriars and had not returned; other members had done so.

At nine p.m. it was time to end our meeting: we all look forward to being together again on 10th August.

JOHNNY BULL MINOR

* * * * *

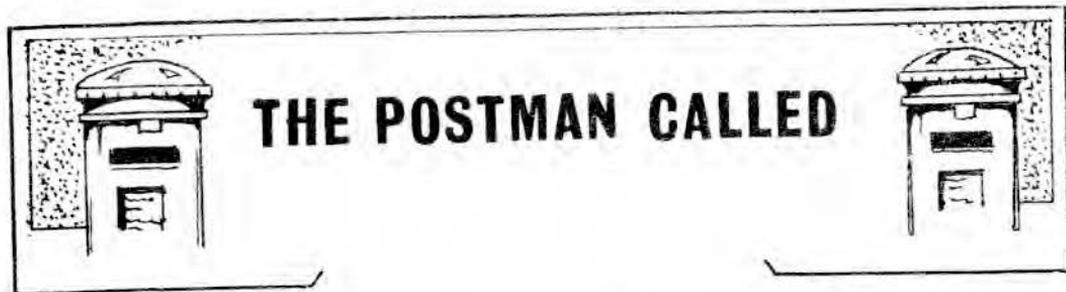
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* * * * *

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH:

We spared the rod and wound up with the beat generation.



R. J. McCABE (Dundee): I was laid low by a bug recently. To pass the weary hours, Danny was my constant companion. He cheered me up a lot. Re-reading my Digests brought back a host of wonderful memories.

W. J. RAYNER (Bury St. Edmunds): It's difficult to realise that I have been taking our magazine since 1946! I treasure all the copies.

J. F. BURRELL (Bristol): Danny's Diary is very enthusiastic about the Wharton/Stacey series. I agree that it is a very moving series especially when Wharton wins through in the end, but it has pronounced weaknesses.

Quelch raises Stacey to the skies before he has known him for long and is very quick to condemn Wharton. All this despite the strong hints from the Head that Wharton was alright until Stacey came.

Also Stacey's alibi for being elsewhere when Piker's barn was burnt was feeble. Three boys go for a walk and for no apparent reason one goes off in another direction. Quelch completely fails to take into account the missing period and Wharton has to pay for the damage.

ESMOND KADISH (Hendon): The Digest continues to act as a sanity-restorer in this increasingly lunatic world! I did enjoy "The Man Who Came Back". Personally, I've never returned to St. Jim's - not being much good at cricket, I doubt whether anyone would remember me anyway!

I loved this month's cover:- "Never darken my doors again!" Nowadays, I suppose, "dad" would think there was something wrong with his son if he hadn't "expressed" himself by doing something delinquent. But there, I expect I'm being unfair and cynical!

I'm happy to have been of some help to Mrs. Woods. The "Weirdslea" stories in the "Schoolgirls' Weekly" had a romantically spectral atmosphere about them which was intriguing, although, of course, as they were written for children, the "ghosts" always had to end up being exposed as fakes. Sometimes I wished that once - just once - the phantom would prove to be genuine!

Have enjoyed the piece on Rookwood by Ernest Holman, and the one by Edward Baldock amongst others.

Long may the Digest flourish!

CHARLES CHURCHILL (Topsham): I possess a Boys' Friend 3d Library containing the opening Cedar Creek stories. I value this book highly. It is printed horizontally across the pages instead of lengthwise, with three columns of print. I know they were like this years ago before they went the normal shape. Do you remember this?

T. HOPKINSON (Hyde): Edward Baldock's "Other Worlds" is one of the best contributions in C.D. for quite some time. Perhaps he could be persuaded to write again on a similar theme and under the same heading.

PAUL GALVIN (Barnsley): In 1926 Maynard's Ltd. (Confectionery) issued a set of twelve trade cards entitled Billy Bunter series. As a collector of cigarette and trade cards I do not have an example of the set in my own collection, but I did see a set recently at an auction. A leading dealer, in his latest catalogue, is selling the cards at £6 each. This seems a long way from the days when small boys stood outside shops asking "Have you got a fag card, mister?".

JIM MERRILLS (Exshaw, Canada): In the May issue I see a picture of Biggles and it brought back pleasant memories of stories in Modern Boy many years ago. As a matter of fact I have 18 copies of a series of him published by Armada paperbacks, so will have to get them out again and have another go. The publication date is 1962 for this series and it says originally published in 1938 which is a while ago.

Danny's Diary is my favourite in C.D. and the Editor's Chat comes next and the rest nicely rounded out with views, reviews and thoughts by so many readers on all parts of the hobby. A real fan magazine.

ALLAN QUATERMAIN

by Cyril Rowe

Has W. T. Thurbon, whom I salute for his article on Rider Haggard in the 1984 annual, ever tried to follow the progress of Allan Quatermain's life from the haphazard appearance of the various books, fourteen in all - and three short stories, for they do not appear in regular sequence like Hornblower, say, or like Teddy Lester.

We can set "MARIE" first, the tale of his youth and first marriage. Second comes ALLAN'S WIFE, the tale of his young manhood and the birth of his son, Harry. Stella, his second wife, is mentioned often after, but never Marie, her death was too tragic, and A.Q. never really got over the anguish of it.

Historically we can date his birth year from "Marie". The Great Trek of 1836, and Dingaan's massacre of Relief's band in 1838 - the date of A.Q.'s marriage. Marie was just 21 and A.Q. a few months younger, so his birth was in 1817.

His marriage to Stella in 'ALLAN'S WIFE' we can put at 1842-3 and Harry's birth at 1844 (say). These few years allow him to recover himself and take up his hunting profession.

We know also from historical dates and references that 'Child of Storm' with Mameena comes next at around 1855 for in the short story 'A Tale of Three Lions' the editor HRH states that Harry who was with A.Q. then, was "a lad of around fourteen" so we now get to 1858 (say), and historical dates give us 1959 for "Maiwa's Revenge".

Hans, A.Q.'s Hottentot companion, appears in six novels which help us somewhat. Can we find a sequence? "Marie" and "Child of Storm" are placed, but where do "The Holy Flower", "The Treasure of the Lake", "She and Alan" fit in. We know "The Ivory Child" is the final one as in it Hans dies and without dispute we can place them all before "FINISHED", as in that tale Hans is referred to in the past tense, so all are before 1879-80 which is the date history gives for the events therein.

"The Holy Flower" comes first 1869-70 followed by "Heu - Heu" a year or so later 1872 (say).

I place "She and Allan" next by the reference to Umslopogaas that A.Q. makes in "Allan Quatermain", "I had not seen him for 12 years", which places it at around 1873. I have the evidence of Allan's death in 1885 for this placement.

"The Treasure of the Lake" must come between this and "The Ivory Child" as in the latter Hans is killed by the elephant Jana.

So can we place these events somewhere in the years 1874-1878 before "Finished", we have to allow for the time journeys take.

Obviously "The Ancient Allan" and "Allan and the Ice Gods" are the hallucinatory experiences in England, when A.Q. lived in Yorkshire, on coming home after "King Solomon's Mines" and the expedition to his death in 1884-5 in ALLAN QUATERMAIN.

I place KSM sometime around 1880-81 as A.Q. meets his two adventures on the S S DUNKELD in which A.Q. reports, had been the passage out of Sir Garnet Wolseley to take charge of the British Army in 1879.

I possess all H.R.H. books in first edition and although I know there are author's errors (which H.R.H. in later editions) and in later additions to the sage attempted to iron out. I make a tentative sequence as:-

Allan's birth in:-	1817	THE TREASURE OF THE	*'&/?&£
MARIE	1838	LAKE	1873-75
ALLAN'S WIFE	1843	THE IVORYCHILD	1875-77
CHILD OF STORM	1855-6	FINISHED	1879
*TALE OF THREE LIONS	1858-9	KING SOLOMONS MINES	1880-81
MAIWA'S REVENGE	1859	THE ANCIENT ALLAN	1882-83
*HUNTER QUATERMAIN'S		ALLAN AND THE ICE	
STORY	1867-8	GODS	1882-83
*LONG ODDS	1869	ALLAN QUATERMAIN	1884-85
THE HOLY FLOWER	1870-71	ALLAN'S DEATH (MID	1885)
HEU-HEU OR THE			
MONSTER	1872		
SHE AND ALLAN	1872-3		

* These are short stories as is 'Macepa the Buck' - 1879.

CONFESSIONS OF A STORY-PAPER ADDICT

by Esmond Kadish

As far back as I can remember, I always seem to have had my nose buried in a story paper. Maybe it's a family tradition - I can certainly recall my mum saying that she had revelled in the doings of Weary Willie and Tired Tim in CHIPS, as a young girl, in the closing years of the last century.

But it was the tuppenny papers, with the bright, glowing coloured covers, that I really coveted, and longed to be able to read. Amongst my earliest recollections is trotting down to Mr. and Mrs. Haye's paper shop, with dad, to buy my first copy of TINY TOTS, when I

was five, and had just started at the local infants' school. Another happy memory is of being perched on dad's knee, whilst he read the latest instalment of "Nobody's Little Girl", the "school serial" in PLAYBOX, in his clear, pleasant voice. Of course, I was desperate to learn to read - what other way was there to enter this fascinating world of story-paper characters? Like most youngsters, in those pre-war days, I soon did! Our "reception" class of forty or so five-year-olds was started off with the "sounds" of the letters almost immediately; there was no nonsense in those days about the child learning to read "when he is ready"!

So I read my own TINY TOTS, and progressed rapidly to CHICK'S OWN, which featured the "ad-ven-tures of Ru-pert the Chick", and then, BO-PEEP. The other coloured papers followed - when funds were available - in quick succession. There was BUBBLES and SUNBEAM, and the two papers which unfolded like a concertina: PUCK and CRACKERS. My warmest affection, though, was reserved for the Bruin Boys in TIGER TIM'S WEEKLY and the RAINBOW (and Tiger Tillie and the Hippo Girls in PLAYBOX, too!) and, like many people, it is an affection which has lasted into adult life. In the mid-fifties, I felt quite a pang on learning that the RAINBOW was to cease publication, and the beloved Bruin Boys banished to the back page of TINY TOTS - "living in straitened circumstances in the back-room flats of Tiny Tottenham", as some witty fellow put it at the time!

There were, I remember, some half-hearted attempts to get me interested in the CHILDREN'S NEWSPAPER, but I never really took to it. The adult newspapers seemed so much more real, and, besides, there was the additional attraction of such favourite characters as Pip, Squeak and Wilfred, Rupert Bear, Happy (the little bear of the Arkubs), and Teddy Tail. So I passed over Arthur Mee's "improving" publication, and joined the Arkubs and the Teddy Tail League instead, receiving badges, and letters actually signed by Teddy Tail and Happy the Bear, respectively! At this point in my reading career, however, it was time to drop such "kids' stuff", and graduate to the exciting world of real boys' papers.

It was a time for experimenting, and I tried as many papers as I could wheedle the necessary tuppences out of my parents. Everyone at school seemed to be reading the Thomson papers, so I took the ROVER, WIZARD, OR HOTSPUR for a while, but found the characters unreal and stereotyped for the most part. I liked the NELSON

LEE, but the paper had almost run its course by the time I had started to read it. Not being "mechanically-minded" - as they used to call it - I was not keen on the MODERN BOY, although I did enjoy the tales of one Charles Hamilton, whose school and adventure stories were almost as good, I thought, as those of Frank Richards and Martin Clifford in the MAGNET and GEM. I dallied, too, with such papers as the CHAMPION, TRIUMPH, and RANGER, but a love-affair never really developed with any of them. I tried the girls' papers, also, and found them surprisingly good, and not one whit as "soppy" as everyone had assured me they would be. Finally I decided that the school-story was my favourite type of fiction - although I enjoyed adventure tales too.

What papers, then, did I ultimately "plump for"? Well, can't you guess?

* * * * *

NO ORCHIDS FOR BILLY BUNTER

writes M. R. Thompson

I don't like Bunter - never have liked Bunter. When his presence is in a story my mood changes from happy reading to dark thoughts of murder. He is a despicable character. Give me one good reason why I should change my mind? and please - PLEASE don't bring his mother into it. His eating alone is most repulsive. If a pig happened to be present as he slurps and gurgles, it would most likely walk away in disgust. He seems to have all the failings that is possible any one human being can have. Conceit, cowardly, thoughtless - I could go on and on through the list. These few lines above will prove to you that I consider Bunter to be a real person. Hamilton has a lot to answer for by introducing me to him many years ago. However, he did bring me into the Happy Circle of so many characters; good, bad and indifferent, and I must admit Bunter does fit in.

* * * * *

DANDY Annuals 1969 - 1970 - 1972 - 1973.

One no date; spine damaged. Beano 1971. Wonder Book of Railways; Buffalo Bill; Rover; Lion; Bobby Bears; Teddy Bears.

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HOWARD BAKER VOLUMES: Greyfriars Book Club Editions 1-9; 11-16; 18-22; 26; 29-37; 39-40; 42-49. Greyfriars Bond Editions 1-12; 21-23; 27-28; 35-40; 42; 65-67; 70-75; 77; 80; 85. Gem vols. 1; 2; 6; 11; 12. H. B. Greyfriars Holiday Annuals 1973-1984. H. B. Holiday Annual 1974. H. B. Summer Omnibus 1977 and 1978. Collectors Pie of Magnet and Gem No. 15. H. B. DeLuxe Collectors Edition China Series No. 25A. All above mint condition.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: Yarook; Greyfriars Prospectus; Museum Press B.B. Picture Book. All mint. Volume Boys' Own Annual Assorted numbers - October 1905-1906. Fair. C.D. Annuals Nos. 26-38 (1972-1984) Mint. Penny Popular - Singles (Fair to Good) Nos. 2-3; 5-40. V.G. for age. H. B. Catalogues - 36 miscellaneous. Original Magnets - Fair condition - 328; 421; 429; 449-451; 455; 458; 460; 462-468; 495; 507; 5-9; 593; 1528; 1557; 1683. Original Gems - Fair condition - ½d 30; 32-36; 38; 40; 43-45; 47. 1d 357; 436-437 (c/c) 438-439; 440 (c/c); 441-444; 459; 462-463; 515. 1½d 537; 558-560; 562; 568. 2d 556. C.D. - Fair to good - 4; 12; 35 (2); 36; 46; 51; 54; 57; 68; 70-71; 111; 118; 127; 128/129; 131; 149; 163; 187; 189; 202; 229; 232; 234; 240; 248; 262; 300; 457/458; 460. Picture Post - 3 volumes October 1, 1938 - Vol. 1 Nos. 1-14, Oct. to Dec. 1938. Mint.

H.B. First issue Magnet Companion (Vol. 2 Nos. 1-13, Jan. to Apr. 1939. Mint.
(Vol. 3 Nos. 1-13, Apr. to July 1939. Mint.

Museum Press - The G/F Characters Vol. 2; Companion Series Vol. 2; G/G Companion. Mint. Rookwood Vol. 5; G/F Companion Centenary Edition Vol. 3; St. Franks Jubilee Comp. Mint. Two C. H. Library Catalogue (Grey and Green covers); The Housemasters Homecoming. Mint. H. B. Grefriars Gazette Nos. 28-29, 31-34, 36-38, 41-42. Mint.

All enquiries regarding any of the above to be addressed to R.F. (Bob) Acraman at Courtfield, 49 Kingsend, Ruislip, Middx., HA4 7DD, who at the request of Mrs. Look has agreed to act as her agent in the sale and disposal of the above collection.

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TWO OF THE BEST AGAIN

by Len Hawkey

Foxwell's name was probably the first to register with the writer also, and I'm sure J.E.M. will not mind my passing a few comments on the two fine artists he so rightly praises. My memory of Foxwell precedes his by almost a decade, thanks to the PLAYBOX Annual of the late "Great War" era. Freddie Crompton (The Brownie Boys) and H. O'Neill (the Two Pickles) also often signed or initialled their work, but the Bruin Boys were my great favourites, and accordingly Foxwells was the name I primarily recall. I did not "find" Shields

till some 9 or 10 years later - I did not find his name in the "Magnet" but I think from some other magazine in which he had signed a drawing. The style was unmistakeable.

By coincidence, I believe they both first appeared together in the PLAYBOX Annual for 1913 - and by an ironic twist, it was Shields who drew the (then) Hippo Boys (page 3 - "Hands Up for the Annual - for those who like to check) whereas Foxwell did a schoolroom illustration of boys running home after classes (page 181 - "Pensive Recollections")! These roles certainly changed in following years. HSF's first Tiger Tim work in the Playbox was the cover of the 1916 Annual - tho' he drew only the last "strip" of their adventures, in this issue. Strangely Mrs. Hippo was still presiding in the Playbox Annual, with M. C. Veitch, Geo. Gatcombe, as well as J. Stafford Baker still portraying the characters - yet Mrs. Bruin was in charge in the "Rainbow" weekly, and Foxwell was already the regular artist. Does anyone know why this was - or why Mrs. Hippo was replaced by Mrs. Bruin? The official "hand over" is depicted in the first "strip" of the 1917 Playbox Annual, but no reasons given. Probably Mrs. H. was worn out by the young miscreants!

Incidentally, B. O. Wymer, another of the "Bruin Boys" artists, was not, as Mr. Doyle states in his 1964 "Who's Who of Boy's Illustrators", one of the last of the line - he started in 1918, if not earlier. Of course, he may still have been depicting them in their last days - I picked up at a Jumble Sale only last week, a 1956 Rainbow Annual - in virtually mint condition - and (unless the A.P. had utilised work from old publications (it didn't look like it) Anton Lock, S. J. Cash, P.J. Hayward, and Harry Lane, as well as dear old R. J. MacDonald, were still drawing, as they had done when the Annual started 30-odd years before! All the characters mentioned in the opening paragraphs were still there, and the artists who portrayed them were adept in imitating the originals.

Shields, alas, was not there, and who indeed could imitate him. J.E.M. - and others - have paid tribute to this superlative illustrator, although I am sure his very best years were already behind him, when he took over from Chapman in the "Magnet". He was then 50, and had been a professional artist for almost 30 years. Looking at his very early work, around the turn of the century, one detects a slight sketchiness, and a likeness at times to Albert Morrow and/or Fred Holmes. But soon, he could - and did - draw anything!

Cartoons and comic-features in e.g. "Pick-me-Up" - adventure and historical stories - funny animals and fairy-stories - Sexton Blake

- adult "romances" - little "thumb-nail" sketches for Answers etc. - and of course both boy's and girl's school yarns. The A.P. seems to have realised his potentialities from the first, and most of his work was for them until his death in the late '40's.

Personally I feel his best work was done between about 1908 and 1920 or so. The large pages of the "Boys' Friend", the "Realm" and "Herald" bear testimony to this - the excellence of his many covers for "Pluck", "Cheer Boys Cheer", etc. - maybe, above all, his work in the "Girls' Friend", "Girl's Reader" and many "libraries" devoted to the young female reader. There was a freshness and vitality, wonderful detail and inventiveness, and a delicacy of line (or brush) work, which is not so evident in his later drawings. This is only to be expected - the inspired sparkle of one's younger days turns to a practised but professional expertise. This is not to denigrate Shield's work in his later years. He was always excellent, and could still turn his hand - or pen - to any subject - but who, at 50, yet alone 60 - can hope to recapture "that first, fine, careless rapture"?

As J.E.M. says, artists like these should always retain a warm place in our memories of the old papers - we are lucky to have lived in a period when such work was available - you have only to look in the pages of "Punch" to see what I mean. The jokes are as good as ever - often funnier than of yore - but the artwork - non-existent! We shall not see the likes of the Brocks, or Shepperson - or Illingworth - or indeed Shields and Foxwell again.

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THE DEBIT AND CREDIT SIDE TO THE HOBBY by J.W. Cook

Have you ever asked yourself "Is it worth it"? The strange fascination these grand old papers and books still hold for us has made many demands that when summed up may leave us making the above remark.

On the debit side there is the continuity of adding to one's collection which can be almost limitless. A glance through the catalogue of boys' papers and books over the last eighty years will show that it is quite possible for any of these publications to turn up in the most unlikely places, and who among us would not rejoice adding such treasures to our collection.

That is, if you can afford to pay the price for them. Some there are who couldn't afford the price but bought them and created trouble for themselves. They overspent. They succumbed to the magnetic charm these old periodicals radiate.

I doubt if there is one of us who doesn't desire to know the history of particular favourite papers and something about the authors. This means delving and writing letters and begins a chain reaction that swells as time goes by. For very soon, you get involved with the sagas of other boy's books and you want to know more about them and collect them.

But if you have any sense you will realise you must limit your expenditure and confine your collecting to only a few sections of the hobby. If you have any sense, that is. But where this most famous of occupational pastimes is concerned it is very unusual to by-pass a paper that rises out of the dim past and could be yours for amount asked.

Then there's the exchanges. And the borrowing. And the returning. Postage not being in the least comparable to the good old days when the papers were published, inroads to our pocket may make us repeat the above remark I make in the beginning.

But what about the credit side? Do these old books and papers retain for us the magic spell we once knew? Do they still transport us into realms that exist only in our wildest dreams? Is the literature so fascinating in these books of long ago that we are compelled to nurse them, to caress them with loving tenderness? And to pay the price asked for them?

The fact that we do all these things answers the questions. For I cannot see any harm in this hobby. Only good. The papers belong to an age that doesn't compare favourably with that of today. We are enjoying these books because they remind us of the days when moral values, education and a privileged caste prevailed and we benefitted from this. One has only to recognise the absence of these today to understand their loss. It seems the habit nowadays to belittle the old values, and for that reason those of us who are impelled to advertise our hobby in the hope of bringing to light new facets of the history of the old books may be looked upon as peculiar. Only because we don't go along with all the new ideas.

Our beloved old papers will certainly not corrupt us. They are wholesome reading and justice is the keynote to them all. Is it all worth it? Yes, I am sure it is. What it does cost us to maintain the hobby is fully recompensed by the wonderful times we get reading about our favourite characters. They will never die. They are your friends, staunch and true.

WILLIAM AND THE BAND OF HOPE



"'E'S EAT NEARLY EVERYTHING, MUM. 'E'S EAT THE COLD 'AM AND THE KIDNEY PIE, AND 'E'S EAT THE JAR OF LEMON CHEESE!" COOK WAS PALE AND OUTRAGED

Recently we presented you with a Thomas Henry "William" illustration from the year 1939. Now we go nearly twenty years earlier, when a younger Thomas Henry was presenting, with equal success, the very early William stories.

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